



*UNITED STATES*  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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**Iowa Bans Texting for All Drivers; Stops All Cell Phone Use by Teens**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today applauded Iowa Governor Chet Culver for signing an anti-texting-while-driving bill into law for all drivers in the Hawkeye state. The new law also prohibits teens with intermediate or restricted licenses from using cell phones at all.

"Iowa's streets are safer today because of this ban," LaHood said. "If you are driving, your full attention should be on getting to where you are going safely, not texting and talking on your cell phone."

Iowa becomes the 21st state to ban texting for all drivers. Under the ban, it's a primary offense for teens to talk on a cell phone or text while driving. For adult drivers, using a hand-held cell phone or texting is a secondary offense which allows law enforcement officials to ticket drivers if they are pulled over for another offense.

According to research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, distracted or inattentive driving has become a national epidemic, accounting for an estimated 6,000 deaths and half-a-million injuries in 2008. In 2009, more than 200 distracted driving bills were under consideration by state legislatures, and the pace is expected to increase this year.

NHTSA has developed sample legislation that states can use as a starting point to craft measures to ban texting. The sample bill is patterned after President Obama's October 1, 2009, Executive Order prohibiting federal employees from texting while operating government-owned vehicles and equipment.

Secretary LaHood has also initiated rulemaking to prohibit texting by commercial truck and bus drivers. The Department has launched a federal website, [distraction.gov](http://distraction.gov), as a forum on distracted driving and information clearinghouse.